

March 25, 2002

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David E. Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer

RECRUITMENT OF PSYCHIATRISTS IN THE ANTELOPE VALLEY

On January 29, 2002, Supervisor Antonovich instructed this Office to report back outlining the difficulties in recruiting psychiatrists in the Antelope Valley, and how to resolve these problems. The following outlines the efforts undertaken by my staff, in collaboration with the Department of Human Resources (DHR), to assist the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to recruit and retain psychiatrists.

For several years, DMH has experienced difficulty in filling all its budgeted psychiatrist positions. To address this problem, on March 19, 2002, your Board approved a contract with CompHealth Associates, Inc., to recruit 16 to 40 Board-certified and Board-eligible child and adult psychiatrists to support existing mental health programs. CompHealth will also develop recommendations to address DMH's psychiatrist retention problems and strengthen DMH's recruitment practices.

CompHealth management has been advised that DMH's highest recruitment priorities are filling vacant psychiatrist positions in the Antelope Valley and at Probation facilities. CompHealth will begin working at DMH on March 25, 2002.

DMH has identified compensation as one of its key recruitment/retention issues. To determine the appropriateness of the County's current psychiatrist compensation, my Office has also reviewed current psychiatrist salaries paid by the State Department of Corrections, the Veterans Administration, and the top ten counties in California. We have concluded that the County's maximum salary range exceeds that of all surveyed

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jurisdictions, but the range minimum is not competitive. As a result, in accordance with Section 6.08.220 (Step Placement Upon Appointment) of the County Code, my Office will continue to expedite review and approval of Special Step Placement requests for all DMH psychiatrist hiring requests, with special consideration of child psychiatrists and vacant positions assigned to the Antelope Valley.

My staff will continue to work with DHR and DMH to expedite the hiring of psychiatrists and to implement long-term solutions. Please call me if you have any questions, or your staff may contact Manuel Rivas, Jr., of my staff at (213) 974-0564.

DEJ:DL
JEJ:MR:tld

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Director of Personnel
Director of Mental Health